

ER Site No. 31: Electrical Transformer Oil Spill (TA-III)

ADS: 1306

Operable Unit: Tech Area III & V

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Site History

Site 31, the Electrical Transformer Oil Spill, consists of a 20-ft by 20-ft concrete pad contained within the Centrifuge Facility near Building 6523 in the northeast corner of TA-III. ER Site 31 was identified as a Solid Waste Management Unit in the 1987 Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA) Facility Assessment. The CEARP Phase I Installation Assessment conducted in 1987 found that the site required additional investigation.

The pad was used to store assorted equipment from the centrifuge, including an electrical transformer. According to information from interviews conducted during the CEARP Phase I Assessment, an electrical transformer approximately 30 ft south of Building 6523 at the Centrifuge Facility blew up in 1973, spilling approximately 25 to 30 gal (95 to 114 L) of transformer oil. The transformer was reportedly replaced, the area was cleaned up, and a new substation was built. However, one interviewee indicated that the transformer did not "blow up"; it only blew a circuit, and no oil was spilled. The transformer reportedly stayed there for a number of years before it was moved. These two reports may relate to separate events.

The transformer said to have leaked at the site was removed sometime prior to 1983. The concrete pad underlying the former transformer, shown in 1971 aerial photographs, is still at the site as of January 2003. The concrete and adjacent soil exhibit no oil stains.

Aerial photographs from 1973 to 1990 were examined for signs of soil disturbances, vegetation changes, or new construction that could impact conditions at Site 31. None were found within the site boundaries or within 1000 ft of the site that had any relationship to or impact on the site.

An initial walkover of the concrete pad was performed to identify stains, spills, or leaks. None were noted. A sampling and analysis plan was designed around the location and placement of equipment and materials that had been identified as possible sources of contamination. The pad

is sloped slightly to the northwest, so any spills are expected to have traveled to the northwest rather than to the southeast.

In March 1994, surface soil samples from 11 locations adjacent to the perimeter of the pad were collected and analyzed for total petroleum hydrocarbons (TPH) and PCBs. TPH was found above the method detection limit (MDL) (but below the most conservative cleanup action level of 100 mg/kg) in two samples. Concentrations of TPH in these two samples were approximately 28 and 54 mg/kg. PCBs were not detected in excess of the MDL of 0.033 mg/kg for any sample.

Constituents of Concern

Mineral-based transformer oil
Polychlorinated Biphenyls (PCBs)

Current Hazards

The site has been fully investigated and sampled. There are no current hazards at this site related to contamination of the surface or subsurface soils. There may be structures or stored materials that remain at the site that are a potential hazard.

Current Status of Work

The site was recommended for No Further Action in the June 1996 Resource Conservation and Recovery Act Facility Investigation (RFI) Report. NMED issued two Notice of Deficiencies (NODs) on the RFI report, one in July 1997 and the other in March 1998. SNL responded to the NODs in October 1997 and July 1998, respectively. On May 5, 2000 New Mexico Environment Department (NMED) found Site 31 appropriate for No Further Action (NFA) petition. The NFA was approved by NMED on November 19, 2001, after completing the public review and permit modification process.

Future Work Planned

No future work is expected at this site.

Waste Volume Estimated/Generated

No waste has been generated at this site.

Information for ER Site 31 was last updated Jan 22, 2003.